GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE
of Native Studies and Applied Research

Strategic Plan
2008

Table of Contents

Table of Contents i
1. Introduction and Background 1
1.1 Strategic Planning Process 1
2. About Gabriel Dumont Institute 3
2.1 Mission Statement 3
2.2 Overview of GDI 3
2.3 Organization of GDI 4
2.4 Governance 5
3. Environmental Scan 7
3.1 Demographics 7
3.2 AHRDA 7
3.3 New Government 7
3.4 Business and Industry 7
3.5 GDI Evaluation 7
3.6 Governance Trends 8
4. Summary of Planning Sessions 9
4.1 We are proud of: 9
4.2 Key issues for GDI consideration: 11
5. Broad Strategic Considerations 13
5.1 Priorities for GDI 14
5.2 A priority concern 15
5.3 Additional areas of interest 16
6. Conclusion 16

1. Introduction and Background

Early in 2008, the Gabriel Dumont Institute Board of Governors began the process of developing a strategic plan for 2008-2011. The strategic planning process was led by the GDI Board of Governors and was based on consultation and input from a wide range of stakeholders. The objective of the planning process was to determine broad strategic directions for GDI for the next three years. It involved seeking input from GDI - its Board, senior management and employees, as well as GDI's political partners, key stakeholders and the Métis community.

1.1 Strategic Planning Process

The GDI Board and senior management held two planning sessions in early 2008. Both sessions were facilitated by Irene Seiferling of Board Dynamics, a Saskatoon-based consultant familiar with the work of GDI.

The first strategic planning session was held on January 11 and 12, 2008 in Saskatoon. The two-day session was attended by approximately thirty people, including an Elder, Board members, staff members, political representatives, community members, student representatives, and managers.

The second planning session was held on April 3, 2008 with the Board and senior management in attendance. The objective of the follow-up session in April was to formulate the broad strategic goals. Prior to doing this, the GDI Board of Governors reviewed the outcomes from the January session as well as the goals outstanding from the current strategic plan.

A discussion document was developed that set out key points from the planning sessions as well as the broad statements of strategic direction, as prioritized by the Board and senior management and unanimously agreed upon at the April session.

In May and June 2008 the strategic planning discussion document was made available to Métis regions, Métis Locals, The MN-S Executive, Provincial Métis Council, and other stakeholders in the province. Representatives for each region were consulted for feedback.

In July and August, 2008 the GDI Board of Governors collected and reviewed the input from the consultation process in order to finalize the strategic plan for the Institute for the next three years.

GDI Strategic Planning Audit Trail

- January 11 & 12, 2008—Facilitated planning session with Board, staff, Elder, politicians, students, community members, managers.

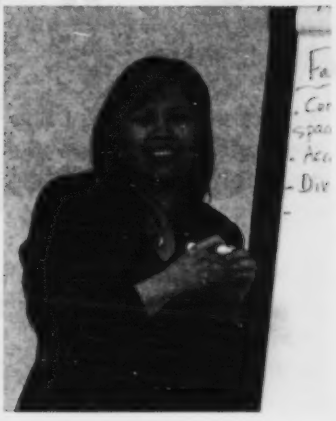
- April 3, 2008 – Facilitated planning session with Board and senior management.

- May, 2008 – Summary and Discussion Report developed based on priorities established in planning sessions.

- May and June, 2008 – Consultation process occurred. Summary and Discussion Report widely circulated to Métis Locals, MN-S Executive, Provincial Métis Council, and other stakeholders for feedback. Report posted on the GDI website.

- July and August, 2008 – Feedback compiled, reviewed, Board review/revision.

- August, 2008 – Board record of decision to accept Strategic Plan 2008 document. Implementation.



2. About Gabriel Dumont Institute

2.1 Mission Statement

The mission of the Gabriel Dumont Institute is *to promote the renewal and development of Métis culture through research, materials development, collection and the distribution of those materials and the design, development and delivery of Métis-specific educational programs and services.*

2.2 Overview of GDI

The Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research Inc. (GDI) was formally incorporated as a non-profit corporation in 1980, to serve the educational and cultural needs of Saskatchewan Métis. The Institute is designated as the official educational arm of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S). GDI offers a variety of accredited educational, vocational and skills training opportunities for the province's Métis in partnership with the University of Regina, the University of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, the province's various regional colleges, and other stakeholders.

As a completely Métis-directed educational and cultural entity, GDI is unique in Canada. At its inception, GDI focused on education through cultural research as a means to renew and strengthen the heritage and achievements of Saskatchewan's Métis. It soon became apparent, however, that the Institute would need to become more directly involved in education if it were to fully serve the multifaceted needs, including the employment needs, of Saskatchewan's Métis community.

As a result, the Institute began developing Métis-specific curriculum and historical publications. It also began to train Aboriginal teachers and to deliver programming contracted from the province's universities, colleges and technical institutes. The first and, perhaps the best known of these efforts, was the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP). In essence, SUNTEP trains Métis teachers to meet the needs of the province's Aboriginal students in the K-12 system. SUNTEP also serves as a model for Aboriginal teacher education programs across Canada.

GDI offers a wide range of programs and services, including:

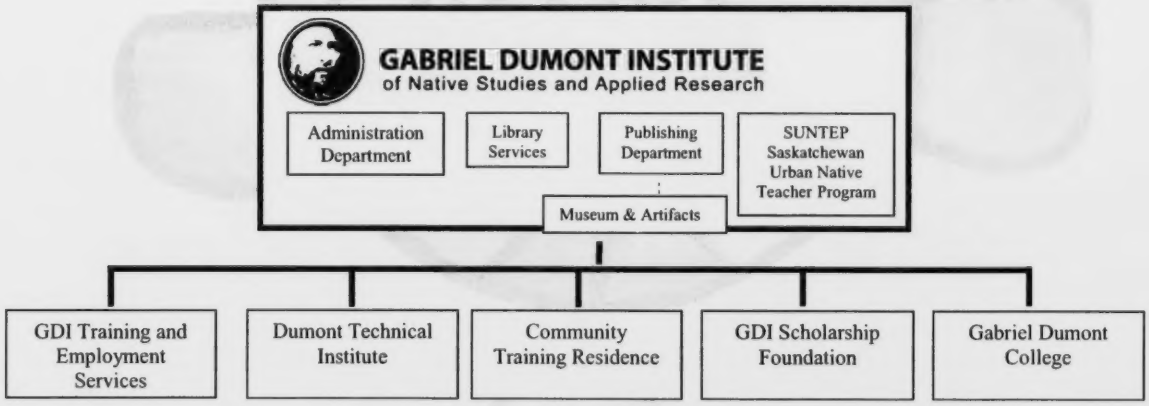
- A publishing department, which creates Métis-specific historical and learning materials;

- Dumont Technical Institute (DTI), which provides Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Skills Training to over 700 students each year in communities across the province;
- SUNTEP, a four-year Bachelor of Education degree program located in Saskatoon, Regina, and Prince Albert;
- Gabriel Dumont College, which offers Arts and Sciences programming to Métis students;
- A Graduate Studies program for Métis graduate students;
- Gabriel Dumont Scholarship Foundation which administers GDI's scholarships; and
- GDI Training & Employment, which provides programs and services to help Métis people prepare to be fully competitive in the labour market.

2.3 Organization of GDI

GDI is structured as a parent company that owns the following five incorporated, non-profit companies:

- DTI;
- Community Training Residence (CTR);
- Scholarship Foundation;
- Gabriel Dumont College (GDC); and
- GDI Training & Employment (GDI T&E)



2.4 Governance

GDI is governed by a 12 member Board of Governors representative of the 12 MN—S political Regions in the province, plus the Minister of Education for the MN—S who serves as the Chairperson. The role of the Board is to develop policies; develop and approve programs; and set GDI's strategic direction.

The current GDI Board of Governors is as follows:

Robert Doucette	Chair
Doyle Vermette	Northern Region I
Vacant	Northern Region II (Clearwater-Clear Lake Region)
Bernice Aramenko	Northern Region III
Michael Bell	Western Region I
Ron Gagnon	Western Region IA
Terry Boyer	Western Region II
Sheila Pocha	Western Region IIA
Darrell Hawman	Western Region III
Brian Chaboyer	Eastern Region I
Kathy Palidwar	Eastern Region II
Gerald St. Pierre	Eastern Region IIA
Guy Blondeau	Eastern Region III

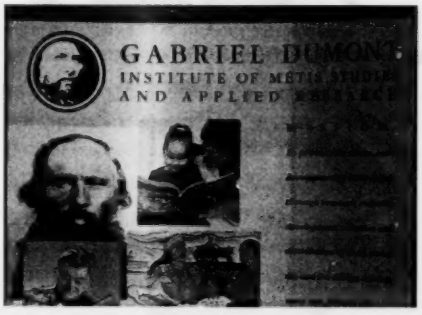
Since its inception, GDI has evolved from an institution focused primarily on cultural education and renewal to include a dual focus on employment training and cultural education.

Over its successful 28+ year history:

- GDI has graduated almost 900 teachers from the SUNTEP program;
- Thousands of Métis people have earned post-secondary credentials from DTI; and
- The publishing department has received numerous provincial awards and recognition for their quality books and learning resources.

In a recent (2008) independent evaluation of GDI, the Institute's cultural mandate was highlighted as its key distinctive feature, critical to the success of GDI students, and their sense of belonging and cultural pride.

The Gabriel Dumont Institute continues to serve the Métis of Canada as the premiere leader in Métis education and Métis cultural preservation, development and renewal. GDI is a unique institution and model for Métis-specific education in Canada.



3. Environmental Scan

3.1 Demographics

According to the 2006 census, 48,115 people self-identified as Métis in Saskatchewan. The number of Métis people living in Saskatchewan is a matter of some dispute, with the Métis Nation —Saskatchewan (MN—S) number closer to 80,000. What is clear is that the Métis population growth is outpacing the growth of other Aboriginal groups as well as the non-Aboriginal population. In Canada in the last decade the Métis population grew by 91% (compared to 29% among First Nations people and 8% for the non-Aboriginal population). (Statistics Canada, 2006 Census). A large youthful Métis population in Saskatchewan presents opportunities for education and training programs. The large population combined with general shortages in the labour market presents a good opportunity for GDI.

3.2 AHRDA

The current AHRDA expires March 31, 2009, presenting GDI with the opportunity to work with Service Canada on a successor labour market agreement.

3.3 New Government

With a relatively new provincial government in power, combined with the imminent expiry of GDI's current five-year contract, the Institute has the opportunity to pursue a *GDI Métis Education Act* that would put the Institute on equal footing with other post-secondary institutions in the province, provide stability, and make the Institute less vulnerable to government.

3.4 Business and Industry

In a climate of labour shortages, business and industry are more inclined to partner with education and training institutions such as GDI.

3.5 GDI Evaluation

In May 2008 Ekos Research Associates completed an independent evaluation of GDI commissioned by Saskatchewan Advanced Education and Employment (AEEL). The evaluation looks at three Institute programs—Dumont Technical Institute (DTI), the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) and the Publishing Department. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the

rationale, design and delivery, effectiveness and impacts for the period between September 1, 2004 and June 30, 2007.

On the whole, the evaluation is positive with respect to GDI – its existence as a unique institution and model for Métis-specific education in Canada. The strongest benefit identified is the cultural mandate of the Institute as a key distinctive feature of GDI, which is deemed critical to the success of students, and their sense of belonging and cultural pride. The current Board of Governors and faculty and staff are described as being of high quality and very dedicated to the success of the Institute. The evaluation praises supports that have been put in place for holistic, client-centred programming – for example, smaller class sizes, individual attention from faculty and staff, and access to ancillary services such as counselling and tutoring.

The evaluation highlights the significant role of GDI in the Métis community, noting that the importance of GDI extends beyond the local provincial Métis community—as a unique Métis-driven educational institution in Canada the Institute is a source of pride among Métis in other provinces.

3.6 Governance Trends

Recent trends in governance, particularly in the post-secondary education sector, point to shifts away from hands-on board involvement to a more policy-driven focus. These trends suggest that GDI is moving in the right direction with respect to its governance model. In 2005 the Institute created a governance model intended to strengthen the governance of the Institute and ensure its long-term stability and prosperity. When creating the model, Directors examined practices at other educational organizations as well as pertinent legal guidelines related to GDI. The proposed governance model was circulated amongst those with a vested interest, feedback was compiled and reviewed by the Board, and in December 2005 bylaw changes were passed at an AGM of the Institute, affirming the change from a "management board" to a "governance board." The GDI governance model includes appointment processes, succession planning, protocols, roles, and Board evaluation.

4. Summary of Planning Sessions

The following section provides a summary of the key points raised during the 2008 planning sessions. They are grouped according to GDI successes and areas that GDI must take into consideration as it determines where to focus its attention and resources over the next three years.

4.1 We are proud of:

GDI has achieved a level of success of which it can be very proud. The only institution of its kind in Canada, GDI delivers on its comprehensive mandate to offer post-secondary education, technical training, cultural programming, publishing, labour market programs and services, and social justice programming.

Growing demand for GDI services. Given the current state of the economy and the changing provincial demographics, GDI is optimistic about its future. The large and youthful Métis population in Saskatchewan is evidence of a continued and growing demand for education and training programs. This expanding population, combined with general shortages in the labour market, present many good opportunities for GDI.

The importance of culture. GDI is a unique Institution in Canada in terms of its mission and mandate. The cultural focus of the Institute is one of its leading strengths. GDI fuses the educational and cultural development of the province's Métis into one coherent whole—no other Aboriginal educational/cultural institution in Canada provides a similar array of services to its constituent community.

GDI is very much culturally oriented, resulting in appropriate supports for students and clients, Métis specific programming, and a majority of the staff being of Métis ancestry.

The AHRDA – a major accomplishment. In 2006, GDI successfully competed for the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement (AHRDA). Since December 2006, GDI has had the opportunity to deliver labour market programming to Métis people in Saskatchewan on behalf of the federal government via the AHRDA. Over this short period of time the Institute has successfully built capacity for delivery of labour market programs, has developed an exemplary student funding allocation model, has established a

scholarship and bursary component, and has stabilized the delivery of employment programs to Métis people in Saskatchewan. All indications suggest that GDI is doing a good job in AHRDA delivery. The current AHRDA expires March 31, 2009 and GDI wishes to have the opportunity to work with Service Canada on a successor labour market agreement.

Good governance is important to GDI. GDI strives to maintain an experienced and committed Board of Governors. Time and again it was acknowledged at the planning sessions that there is a movement of the board in a positive direction and things are improving. The Institute needs to continue in this direction and continue to build on these successes.

GDI is proud of its organizational structure and delivery on services. The people at GDI are one of the Institute's major strengths. The staff of the Institute is highly skilled and committed to the Institute. They have demonstrated an unparalleled loyalty to GDI.

GDI endeavours to be responsive to clients, to labour market needs, to communities. The Institute participates in a variety of needs assessment processes in order to provide the right training in the right communities at the right time. Meeting student needs is a priority. The organization chooses to remain adaptable and flexible in programming, in staff relations and particularly in meeting student needs.

GDI has developed positive relationships with stakeholders, partners, Métis communities, and governments. The Institute has built its credibility over its twenty-eight year history. The organizations seeks to remain accountable and transparent to its stakeholders, including funders, staff, students, and the Métis community.

It was noted at the planning session that "the people who started GDI have no idea of the magnitude of what they've done. The long-term beneficial impacts of an institution like GDI are just beginning to be felt."

4.2 Key issues for GDI consideration:
GDI has experience rapid growth in a short period of time, essentially doubling the size of the Institute since 2006. The success and rapid growth of the last few years have a two-pronged impact on GDI – a sense of accomplishment and a need to build on those successes. GDI is confident that it is delivering well on its mandate. In order to continue to deliver fully on the mandate, however, GDI needs to build on its strengths and it needs to focus on building a stable foundation - that is, seek stability in: a) a governance/legal status and b) internal stability. GDI also recognizes the overriding importance of culture and the continuing importance of communication, internally and with stakeholders.

During both planning sessions there was an ardent interest in solidifying GDI's legal status and in strengthening its governance relationships.

Legal status. With a new provincial government in power the Institute has the opportunity to pursue legislation that would see the Institute become an Act of government rather than its current status as a five-year contract. This crucial legislation would put the Institute on equal footing with other post-secondary institutions in the province and make the Institute less vulnerable to itinerant government decision-making. A *Gabriel Dumont Institute Act* would resolve several issues related to stability, funding, public profile and perception. GDI needs a more equitable distribution of resources and a more equitable funding relationship with both the federal and provincial governments.

Governance relationships. The Institute needs a long term governance structural solution. The roles and relationships between GDI and its key governing stakeholder partners, in particular the provincial government and the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan, must be clearly defined and delineated. "The Institute faces risks from all levels of government—Métis, provincial, federal, in relation to funding, interference, equity, resources, policy shifts, and so on."

Relationship with Métis political body. During the planning sessions it was articulated many times and in many ways that an arms length relationship to the Métis political body is essential to good governance for the Institute. The existence, or perceived existence, of the potential for interference, undue influence and conflict of interest reflect negatively on the Institute and have negative implications. It is

felt that GDI is functioning well in providing high quality, on-the-ground education for Métis people in the province. The interests of Métis education can be best served by the MN-S in the areas of advocacy, political lobbying and representation.

GDI Board of Governors. In the area of Board governance, the Institute has taken some positive steps but this work must continue. There are several steps yet to take in enhancing the governance model and practices. GDI intends also to continue building the skills and policies of its governors.

Internal capacity. Internal capacity is a central concern for GDI. The Institute has experienced unprecedented growth over the past two years. Such rapid growth now requires that the Institute focus on the next few years as the time for internal stabilization.

As a priority GDI must focus on acquiring and maintaining sufficient, high quality staff. With the growing labour shortage, GDI must plan ahead to ensure retention of quality staff and the ability to attract additional staff with the appropriate skills and training.
"The Institute faces risks if adequate attention is not paid to stabilizing the growth of the Institute." The finance and accounting department was centralized in a move from Regina to Saskatoon. This department continues to work on improving its stability and needs to continue its efforts to stabilize.

Vision, Mission, Values. The mission of GDI is central to the work of the Institute and the activities of GDI are aligned with its original mission statement, which considers the educational and cultural needs of the Métis of Saskatchewan. Through decades of development, successful programs and services have become stronger and new programs have been added as needed. Throughout, the role and function of each area of the Institute continues to evolve to better serve the Métis. This occurs with forward thinking and planning and the ability to merge current needs and realities with future dreams and visions. The 2008 strategic planning process identified the need to revisit the Institute's vision, mission and values at a later date.

Additional concerns were raised in regard to student needs, programs and services, and facilities. Comments on these issues included the following:

- Demand and competition for students pose a risk to program development and delivery. Related to this concern is the rising trend of mainstream institutions and organizations toward "targeting" programs and program funds to Métis students.

- Facilities at GDI, particularly in Saskatoon, are inadequate, over-crowded, and scattered. Without a unified 'home' for GDI the Institute continues to lack stability and a permanent presence.

- Given the economic climate of Saskatchewan, it is recognized that problems with staff and student recruitment will continue. This result is increasing difficulty in recruiting staff to work in the Institute as competition for qualified staff at all levels grows. Furthermore, many individuals who formerly did not have ready access to the labour market are now being hired, a trend that is resulting in the reduction of the pool of potential students and clients. The students and clients who are coming to GDI are increasingly multi-barriered clients that require more supports and resources. The Institute is competing with mainstream institutions for a limited pool of candidates.

- In the longer term, GDI is seeking a permanent home, one central location from which to direct its multiple activities. Such a 'centre of excellence' will ensure a long term presence, more stability in service delivery, a proper home for its archives and museum artifacts, and state of the art educational facilities. Language initiatives and cultural programs of the Institute could be enhanced.

- Next to governance and internal stabilization issues, communication is the next priority for GDI. This includes communication with the Métis community at large, improving communication with stakeholders, and improving communication between and within GDI departments. It also includes communication with the general public with a view to showcase accomplishments and to enhance the profile of the Institute.

5. Broad Strategic Considerations

The following section sets out the broad strategic directions that are the most important considerations for the next three years. In order to maximize resources and to have the greatest impact on the Métis

community, GDI understands the need to priorize the "wish list" of goals. As significant progress is made on the priority goals, the organization can give attention to the additional goals as stated below.

5.1 Priorities for GDI

5.1.1 Governance Roles and Relationships – **GDI will strengthen and stabilize its governance and legal status.**

GDI will seek the finalization of a *Gabriel Dumont Institute Act*. The finalization of a *Gabriel Dumont Institute Act* would give GDI permanent legal status resulting in a firm footing going forward in terms of recognition, credibility and resourcing. This piece of legislation would then be the foundation from which to define and strengthen the relationships between GDI and the MN-S and the provincial and federal governments.

GDI is committed to the continuing development of GDI governance and the governance skills of the GDI Board of Governors.

5.1.2 Internal capacity and stabilization - **GDI will stabilize and affirm its internal structure, processes and operations.**

GDI will organize itself internally so that it can effectively and efficiently deliver on its mandate. The objectives are to examine and strengthen internal structure and processes and to clarify staff roles and expectations.

Also the organization will review its staffing policies to address key issues of retention and recruitment of qualified staff. This can also include the development of human resources policies such as a Code of Ethics and appropriate nepotism policies.

5.1.3 Métis Centre of Excellence - **GDI will plan for a permanent Saskatoon-based facility from which to conduct its central affairs.**

GDI is committed to its culture and heritage which is seen as a cornerstone of its mission. In order to deliver on this mission, GDI will plan the building of a permanent home. This will serve as its central headquarters, the location for its archives and museum artifacts, and with facilities to deliver programs and services.

5.1.4 AHRDA - The Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement – **GDI will seek to renew its partnership with the federal government to deliver labour market programs and services in Saskatchewan.**

GDI views the successor strategy to the AHRDS as imperative; the delivery of training and employment programs and services is a natural and essential component of the GDI mission. Work for the post-AHRDA process is key priority for GDI.

5.1.5 GDI Cultural Strategy – **Métis culture is a cornerstone of the GDI mission; amassing and disseminating the Métis cultural legacy will remain a priority focus.**

A cultural strategy is also a high priority for GDI. By its culture the Métis distinguish themselves as a people and as the agent that can deliver unique programs and services to the community. GDI is in a position to promote Métis culture, to retain the language, the history and the stories, and to deliver this legacy to generations of Métis in Saskatchewan and beyond.

5.1.6 Communications - **GDI will systematically maintain open lines of communication with its stakeholders and partners.**

GDI will establish policies and procedures by which to maintain open communication and strong, open relationships with its key stakeholders. With the development of a solid communications policy and program, GDI will ensure regular interaction with its stakeholders and the community. GDI will develop consistent and high quality messaging, it will provide regular reports, and it will seek regular feedback. Additionally, GDI is interested in increasing public awareness of the Institute, its work and accomplishments.

5.2 A priority concern

Racism is an overriding concern for GDI. It was felt by session participants that some progress is being made to ease the issues of racism, but it remains a societal issue. It was agreed that no one strategy will solve this complex problem. Rather, GDI progress in achieving the goals stated above will do much to counter the negative effects of racism. As GDI is successful in achieving its mission, and as the graduates of GDI's programs establish themselves in the community, the negative stereotypes will continue to be eroded.

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5.3 Additional areas of interest

While the following additional goals and objectives did not achieve a priority level at this time, they will remain on the high interest list. The additional areas of interest for GDI include:

From the 2008 sessions:

- Right mix of programs and services, training and employment services
- Labour market strategy
- Partnerships with industry and employers
- Environmental sustainability policies
- Student recruitment and retention planning

From the previous strategic plan:

- A northern campus
- Adequate representation of Métis in the trades
- Graduate studies programming
- Core funding for GDC

6. Conclusion

The GDI Board of Governors, GDI senior management and staff are passionate about the GDI mission and seriously intent about meeting the needs of owners and stakeholders. Institute leaders are committed to setting priority goals that are realistic, achievable and supported by the community and stakeholders.